

PUBLIC LECTURE  
SPONSORED BY WORKMEN'S CIRCLE  
AT BIRKS HALL, SGWU

METROPOLITAN YMCA  
OF MONTREAL

FROM THE INFORMATION OFFICE  
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GERALD WRIGHT DIRECTOR

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS  
UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOLS

June 14th, 1963

WORKMEN'S CIRCLE - ANNUAL LECTURE

As Canadian Delegate, Professor Arthur Lermer participated in the International Congress of Economists in Rome on economic planning. Immediately thereafter he conducted an economic research study in Western Europe. You are cordially invited to a reception with the following programme:

- 1) Opening remarks . . . . . P. Volkovitch
- 2) The social, economic dynamics of Western Europe (from Rome to Stockholm) --  
lecture . . . . . Prof. A. Lermer
- 3) Solo by an outstanding vocalist,  
composer and conductor, Ben Yomen (Miami)

Place: Birks Hall, Sir George Williams University  
1435 Drummond Street

Date: Saturday, June 15th, 1963

Time: 8:00 p.m.

\*\* ATTACHED ARE ENGLISH NOTES ON THE TEXT OF THE LECTURE--

THE LECTURE WILL BE DELIVERED IN YIDDISH.

Notes on text to be delivered  
in Yiddish on June 15th--re-  
lease time, 10:00 P.M.-- by  
Professor Arthur Lermer, Chair-  
man of Department of Economics,  
SGWU, to Workmen's Circle at  
Birks Hall.

## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one should begin with a brief statement about the organization which sponsors tonight's lecture. The Workmen's Circle, a fraternal order with over 65,000 members in North America, is a democratic movement, left of center, with strong social democratic undertones. It originated in the late 1890s on the East Side of New York City as an effective instrument serving the cause of integrating the lonely impoverished Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe into the American urban scene. The Canadian branch offspring followed the same philosophy.

It served as a mutual social benefit society, with emphasis on education.

When in the trying years between the two wars so many Jews looked toward Moscow for a solution to the perplexing rise of anti-semitism and social injustice, the Workmen's Circle stood almost alone in its relentless fight against communism and for reintegration of the Jewish people into the North American society. It has been consistently dedicated to the evolution of a fuller economic, political, social, and cultural democracy in the U.S.A. and Canada, as well as throughout the world.

It is in that spirit that the Workmen's Circle pioneered in the formation of the Jewish Labour Committee, formed in the 1930s to combat fascism and anti-semitism, and in fact to combat any form of racial discrimination.

Today, the Workmen's Circle is in the forefront of the great struggle for human rights now being conducted on the North American continent.

During the war, through the Jewish Labour Committee, the Workmen's Circle penetrated into the ghettos, hide-out bunkers, and concentration camps with the most vital materials and moral assistance. One of the most glorious acts was the saving of over 1600 families, the majority of whom were non-Jews from Western Europe and the Russian occupied territories of Poland, from the Nazi holocaust.

My family reached this promised land of Canada in 1941, via Russia and Japan, after an almost two year odyssey as a result of the full assistance rendered to us by the Jewish Labour Committee.

No wonder that it is with a sense of great pride I am associated with this movement and have readily accepted to share

some of my impressions from a recent trip to the main capitals of Europe with you, ladies and gentlemen, tonight.

#### NOTES ON LECTURE

My topic has great scope; "The Dynamics of Western Europe". There are so many facets of the current dynamic trends in Western Europe that any attempt in a lecture to treat the topic in a comprehensive manner would be impossible. I shall single out the topic of economic planning because of the International Congress of Economic Planning which I attended in Rome and the numerous interviews with planning authorities which I subsequently conducted in Rome, Paris, Bruxelles, Stockholm, Oslo, and The Hague.

The methods training differ with each country, but the common denominators seem to be:

1. That a democratic society cannot accept laissez-faire policy.
2. Nor can a democracy flourish when private initiative is suppressed.
3. Government must, therefore, plan and induce the public and private sectors of the economy to respond to the planning process.
4. The process of planning requires, not only a profound system of economic research, but a most enlightened attitude of all classes in the society.
5. Both trade unions and management do participate actively in the planning process.

6. The European Common Market indulged recently in effective planning--it also exercised a very strong influence on the entire planning process in Western Europe.
7. The planning system widened and enhanced the democratic process by developing another non-political meeting ground beside the parliamentary sphere for the meeting of divergent economic groups.
8. Above all, through a continuous concerted effort, planning assures benefits of a long-run perspective in economic development.
9. Economic planning has so far helped to avoid fluctuations and raised the economic potential of the respective economies. The standard of living has risen accordingly in each case.
10. The France of Charles de Gaulle, certainly not a social democratic oriented country, has nonetheless under economic planning reached the highest level of efficiency in the planning process and is leading all the countries, both in terms of techniques as well as results.
11. While research and persuasion are the main vehicles of the French planning techniques, the carrot (i.e. in terms of tax benefits, subsidies, etc.) as well as the stick (through the credit system) are used effectively in the application of the plan.

North America and Canada especially can learn a great deal from the Western European experience in planning. Too long have we shunned government intervention through planning for economic

growth because of our long have we shunned government intervention through planning for economic growth because of our long out-dated adherence to laissez-faire principles. Out of the experience of the depression crisis, we finally only reluctantly accepted counter cyclical intervention on behalf of government. If we are willing to throw off these out-moded attitudes, then we can learn from European experience that long-range coordinated economic planning between government and public and private sectors of enterprise is the only truly creative and realistic approach to the problems of the business cycle and to the problems of long-range economic development and rising standard of living for all.

With the establishment of a Federal and Quebec economic advisory council, we are just beginning to move in this direction. The sooner we would appreciate the full significance and impact of the planning process for Canada, the greater the chances for a successful acceleration of our economic growth and a better living for all.